

## City of Alexandria, Virginia

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9-24-02

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 11, 2002

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *ps*

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES OBTAINING ACCREDITATION  
FROM THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION (APWA)

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of a resolution endorsing the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services obtaining accreditation from the American Public Works Association (APWA).

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** That City Council:

- (1) adopt the attached resolution endorsing the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services' efforts to obtain accreditation from the American Public Works Association (APWA); and
- (2) authorize the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services to forward this resolution to the American Public Works Association (APWA).

**BACKGROUND:** The American Public Works Association (APWA), a national organization that represents the public works profession in both the public and private sectors, has established a voluntary accreditation program designed to enhance the effectiveness of public works agencies. According to the APWA, accreditation is the "mark of professionalism that indicates that a public works agency has made the commitment to continuous improvement in the delivery of public works operations and services in the community it serves."

In 1983, a number of public works managers recognized the need to establish a set of uniform management practices. As a result, a national accreditation program was developed to promote best management practices in the public works field, and a guide, the Public Works Management Practices Manual, was written to assist agencies applying for accreditation through APWA. There are 33 functional areas listed in the manual and a recommended management practice for each functions is included to provide general guidance on what public works agencies should be doing, not how they should do it. The APWA believes the individual agency knows best how to carry out the best management practices. The City's T&ES Department has identified 16 of the 33 functional areas that are applicable to its operation. If approved, T&ES will conduct a self-

assessment of the 16 practices, using the criteria in the APWA Manual. Upon completion of the self-assessment, T&ES would make the necessary improvements to bring each practice into full compliance according to APWA criteria. The next step would be to invite the APWA accreditation team to conduct a site visit to determine if the Department's operations are in compliance with the APWA standards. Once the Department receives full accreditation, the accreditation would be renewed every three years.

**DISCUSSION:** The Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) has applied for, and was accepted by APWA, to participate in the accreditation program. As part of the accreditation process initiation, unlike most accreditation processes, each agency is required to obtain a commitment from its local governing body to authorize and support accreditation. Attached is a resolution that embodies this endorsement that Council is being asked to adopt. Passage of this resolution would signify to the APWA, other City agencies, the employees in the T&ES Department, and the broader community, that Council fully supports the accreditation process.

T&ES is committed to continual improvement in the quality of its services. If approved, the accreditation process would strengthen this resolve and benefit citizens and businesses as follows:

- A commitment to and recognition of policies, procedures and processes that promote effective delivery of projects and services;
- A process for conducting a needs assessment to ensure that all critical services have been addressed;
- A process for setting goals for improvement of T&ES practices, services and facilities;
- Increased productivity and effectiveness through critical evaluation of programs and services;
- Provide tools for the establishment of 1) performance measurement systems, 2) internal performance standards for operations, and 3) management and administrative functions;
- An opportunity for professional development; and
- A process for staying abreast of the latest developments in public works operations and management.

It is anticipated that it will take approximately two years to complete the self-assessment and improvement process concluding with an evaluation by the APWA accreditation team in early

2004. It is understood that: 1) any costs associated with the results of the self-assessment and improvement process that are above the T&ES budget would be considered in the context of each year's budget process and would compete for funding with other initiatives and needs, and 2) the analysis of any proposed changes to the operation of other City Departments would be analyzed with those departments and any changes made would need the concurrence of those departments.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The \$4,000 cost for the APWA application process was paid from the T&ES operating budget in FY 2002. T&ES has \$10,000 budgeted for accreditation in its operating budget for FY 2003. Additional costs would depend on any changes made to departmental operations, and would be determined on a case-by-case basis based on availability of funds.

**ATTACHMENT:** Resolution

**STAFF:**

Richard J. Baier, P.E., Director, T&ES

Morgan Routt, Budget/Management Analyst, OMB

**RESOLUTION NO.**

**WHEREAS**, the American Public Works Association (APWA) is an organization that provides national accreditation and recognition to public works agencies; and

**WHEREAS**, APWA has developed best management practices for public works agencies that have become the standard toward which public agencies across the country aspire to achieve; and

**WHEREAS**, public works agencies that become accredited by the APWA for achieving these best management practices are recognized nationally and locally for their commitment to professionalism and to improving the delivery of public works services; and

**WHEREAS**, APWA provides public works agencies with suggestions for improving communication, clarifying budget needs, identifying operational and management needs, promoting teamwork and staff development, improving inter-department coordination, increasing knowledge of service delivery, training and orienting supervisors and bench marking the Departments' performance; and

**WHEREAS**, The City of Alexandria's Department of Transportation and Environmental Services seeks to obtain accreditation from the APWA in an effort to achieve its goal of providing the best services possible to the residents, visitors, and businesses in the City of Alexandria and creating a good working environment for its employees.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alexandria City Council hereby expresses its support of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services in obtaining accreditation from the American Public Works Association.

ADOPTED: September 24, 2002

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KERRY J. DONLEY, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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BEVERLY I. JETT, CITY CLERK

RESOLUTION NO. 2042

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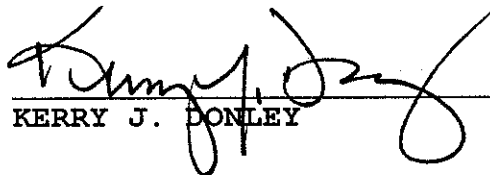
**WHEREAS**, public works agencies that become accredited by the APWA for achieving these best management practices are recognized nationally and locally for their commitment to professionalism and to improving the delivery of public works services; and

**WHEREAS**, APWA provides public works agencies with suggestions for improving communication, clarifying budget needs, identifying operational and management needs, promoting teamwork and staff development, improving interdepartment coordination, increasing knowledge of service delivery, training and orienting supervisors and benchmarking the Department's performance; and

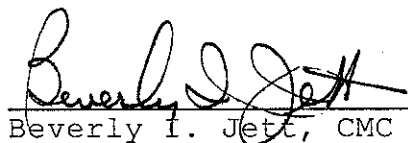
**WHEREAS**, the City of Alexandria's Department of Transportation and Environmental Services seeks to obtain accreditation from the APWA in an effort to achieve its goal of providing the best services possible to the residents, visitors, and businesses in the City of Alexandria and creating a good working environment for its employees;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alexandria City Council hereby expresses its support of the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services in obtaining accreditation from the American Public Works Association.

ADOPTED: September 24, 2002

  
KERRY J. DONLEY MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
Beverly I. Jett, CMC City Clerk